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Tethered

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TETHERED

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Art

By

Samantha Jean Dixon
Winthrop University
Bachelor of Fine Arts, 2007

May 2013
University of Arkansas

ABSTRACT

Tethered addresses the innate fear of forgetting where an individual's family originates, both physically and historically. Not long after discovering that part of my family was almost completely annihilated during the Holocaust, I produced *Tethered* as visual documentation of the long-term effects of families of survivors. The exhibition is also influenced by my grandmother's experiences as a Mauthausen concentration camp survivor and my own experiences being raised by a survivor.

The knowledge of the imminent loss of memory initiates an instinct to repetitively record and remember personal history. Numerous memories have been forcefully buried in the darkest recesses of the minds of many family members-- they continuously surface through communication with my mother and grandmother. As personal memory is collectively shared, psychological effects of the survivor pass on through storytelling. As artistic objects develop, I continue to search for threads between history, place, and identity as a way to demonstrate a new reality, a struggle, and a story.

The books and prints in the exhibition symbolize the compilation and transportation of memory that is witnessed through sensory communication and observation. Fragility of memory and history is emphasized through the use of materials and construction of each object. Many of the objects reiterate the struggle to address what is missing or what will eventually disappear and never return. Other objects symbolize the residual effects of the past and how they are still present in family's daily lives. The iconography of loss plays an important role in constructing each piece, creating a complex relationship between narration and symbolization. With each object, I attempt to grasp a lost identity and the haunting memories of experiences that are not fully understood.

This thesis is approved for recommendation
to the Graduate Council.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, past and present, for their endless inspiration. Special thanks go to my great-grandparents, Oma and Opa, my grandparents, Bernard and Janet D'Aloisio, my parents, John and Debra Dixon, my brothers, John and Kenny Dixon and my fiancé, Ross Kosakowski for always giving me strength and encouragement throughout the years.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Growing up in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, I was interested in sewing and clothing at a young age. My personal world has been surrounded by sewing objects and historical clothing that have been stored in my bedroom closet since I was a child. My mother's old Singer sewing machine was a part of my bedroom set, and I would often play with her large collection of buttons and spools of thread while she made my clothes.

In addition, many of the objects in my bedroom were adorned with my great-grandmother's antique doilies. Delicate handmade crocheted doilies were used as ornamentation for my handmade Amish furniture, often enhancing porcelain gifts from my parents and grandparents. The largest of the antique doilies was placed there by my mother as an ornament for my glass perfume stand, enhancing the fragility of the objects that surrounded my most personal space. Unknown to me at the time, I was encircled by artifacts of my great-grandmother's tragic past. After hearing stories of my great-grandmother's life before and after the war, I became increasingly aware of how much the objects carried her personal history, offering me a chance to connect to her life through tactile communication with her collection of handmade doilies.

The symbolism of sewing and clothing is also representative of my guardianship of my family and family history. Each object in the exhibition contains a high level of complexity that relates to the physicality of the body and the emotional attachment to what the clothing is concealing. However, the actual clothing isn't what always engages my imagination. My interest is in the painstaking construction behind the object, the relationship to the original owner, and the stories behind the objects. Fabric triggers memories of the historical past –

stains, holes, folds, tears, and the mending.¹ All of this provides a dialogue between the interior and exterior of an individual, both emotionally and physically.

II. INFLUENCES

PERSONAL HISTORY AS AN ARTISTIC SOURCE

When I was younger, I spent many days after school at my grandparents' house. I would devote hours to flipping through old photo albums and observing my grandparents' collection of family photographs and objects from over the years. I was always intrigued by my family's past, mainly because it felt so mysterious. My grandmother hardly spoke more than a few words when I was with her, and I was often afraid to break the silence between us.

After discovering that she was a Holocaust survivor a few years ago, she began discussing the family photographs that I already found myself strongly attached to. It was a history that was at times brutal and terrifying and at the same time fascinating. There are very few family photographs left from before the war, and I found myself longing to connect to the family members and friends that disappeared.

Until this point, I had no idea that I was connected to Jewish history and the Holocaust. Throughout my childhood, I regularly attended and was confirmed at King of Glory Lutheran Church in South Carolina. Many times, my brothers and I were appointed ceremonial duties to the church, often serving as acolytes, crucifers and lectors each week. As more stories of my grandmother's experiences and history unfolded, I became increasingly interested in learning about her life and connection to my extended Jewish family.

¹ John Michael Kohler Arts Center 1998, 8

The knowledge of my family history was new to me, and that was the first time that I committed myself to learning about the Holocaust. I found myself obsessively researching the history of the Holocaust, often re-watching documentary footage of concentration camp liberations. Part of me was disgusted by my preoccupation with such traumatic and disturbing imagery, however, I felt like I was forcing myself to remain sensitized by the subject matter. The goal of the research was to find a connection to this past, even with the knowledge that I am so far detached from the actual events. Last summer, I found myself becoming enormously anxious when watching documentary footage from concentration camps, unable to understand this newfound reaction. It wasn't until I began incorporating family photographs back into my work when things began to connect together. I realize now that my anxiety came from unconsciously searching for faces that I could possibly recognize, simultaneously expecting and dreading the chance of recognizing an actual family member in the videos.

Part of this obsessive research also comes from my communication with my grandmother and other family members. I understood that it would be difficult to discuss such a personal and traumatic history with her, and I knew that there would be consequences to her digging up such horrific memories. She would often give me bits and pieces of information for me to investigate, and at times would help me pick out books at the library. She would never open these books, and would only quietly suggest dates and names for me to research.

In a collaborative effort with my mother and grandmother to communicate this family history, I started developing work that focused on creating visual narratives through inherited objects and several artistic processes. As historical events surfaced, I started piecing together a lost identity and history. Much like the emergence of fossils in archaeological surveys, this history emerges in fractions and must be carefully constructed in the most delicate manner.

Each time my grandmother and I spoke, our lives slowly connected. I gained an understanding of her not through words, but through her reactions. It was the change of her tone, the quiet moments, and the break in her voice that I connected with. Words were used sparingly, and they often felt like they weren't enough to explain such traumatic and heartbreaking experiences.

Over the past year, I started this same type of communication with my mother; slowly realizing how much of my grandmother's experiences deeply affected how my mother and I perceive the world. Like my grandmother, my mother has her own collection of family objects and photographs that represent a history that I know so little about; these objects relate to sewing and my great-grandmother's history as a seamstress during the war. The complexity of their lives and the emotional impact of the past forced me to understand how little I actually know about the people closest to me.

This understanding propelled me to develop imagery that recalled generations of women in my family. The imagery of the parachute is a multi-layered reference to my great-grandmother's experiences during that war and a metaphorical and somewhat naïve representation of life and death. My naïve symbolism of death and the afterlife resonates with how I often find myself unable to understand the magnitude of destruction that is contained within my family history. When I witness death from a physical and emotional distance, this lack of understanding often evokes within me a loss of innocence.

The parachute and dress imagery in the *Tethered* exhibition also relates to a specific story about my great-grandmother during the war. Since my German great-grandmother was in a mixed marriage to a Jewish man, she was forced out of work. At this time, my great-grandfather was forcefully transported by train to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, leaving my great-grandmother and my grandmother to fend for themselves.

My great-grandmother relied on sewing and knitting to make money, often scavenging for found material to work with. One day, a young Jewish couple requested my great-grandmother to make a wedding dress for them before they were sent away. The woman had her heart set on a white wedding dress for the marriage. However, my great-grandmother's selection of fabric was limited to other colors and materials. My great-grandmother found a white parachute that was abandoned in the woods and converted it into a wedding gown for the couple. Unfortunately, the couple was separated into different work camps before the wedding. She never found out if the couple ever reunited or survived.

Other similar stories of survival, death, and the afterlife play an integral role in the development of the imagery in *Tethered*. As I desperately attempt to connect to my family history, the knowledge of its gradual disappearance forces me to try to thread together the extensive gaps in history that have yet to be communicated. The parachute, balloon imagery, and slip cast objects in the exhibition represent my attempt at holding on to a past that will essentially become out of reach. In effect, the process of repetition becomes a visual and tactile method of communicating my ties to my family history that I cannot come to terms with.

LONG TERM EFFECTS OF FAMILIES OF SURVIVORS

Recent research offers an interesting expansion on studies of Holocaust survivors and their children (second generation), intently focusing on the importance of the third generation. Behavioral psychologist Julia Chaitin's article, "Issues and Interpersonal Values among Three Generations in Families of Holocaust Survivors," elaborates on the importance of the inclusion of the third generation in studies of long-term effects on survivors. Chaitin states, "This study aims to uncover the issues, and their related values, which the survivors, their children, and their

grandchildren attach to the Holocaust, in order to gain understanding into how work through this traumatic past.”² Psychologists, such as Chaitin, are also researching how descendants of Holocaust survivors communicate the history of the Holocaust to their children and others that have no former relationship with the survivor.

Studies show that psychological effects of traumatic events often influence not only family members who experienced them, but their descendants as well.³ The Holocaust occurred over sixty years ago, and many survivors are now reaching the end of their lives. Since many individuals of the third generation are the last direct contact to the survivor, they will make the choice to carry on the history of the survivor and teach the lessons of the Holocaust to children that have no personal connection to the survivor.⁴ As for those that decide not to carry on their personal history through storytelling and other forms of communication, they could perhaps be freeing themselves from the trauma experienced by the first and second generation of survivors. Others, however, will “be responsible for carrying much of the burden of integration of the Holocaust past into a society trying to move from of long history of war and peace.”⁵ These individuals, including myself, will dually take on the responsibility of communicating their family history to others while struggling with the enormous task of pushing past the desensitization of the Holocaust.

In Chaitin’s article, Bar-On and Selah also describe what is known as “partial relevance” in reference to the long term effects of generations of survivors. Partial relevance is defined by the individual’s interpretation of the Holocaust and belief that the Holocaust has some relevance

² Chaitin 2002, 379-381

³ Chaitin 2002, 380

⁴ Chaitin 2002, 380-381

⁵ Chaitin 2002, 381

to his or her life.⁶ Appropriately, Sigmund Freud's concept of "working through" is interlaced into research associated with Holocaust survivors and following generations. "Working through" is, for many, a lifelong process in which an individual learns to deal with the internal, difficult, and unresolved conflicts that an individual is confronted with.⁷ As the third generation of survivors decides on whether to carry on with the history of the Holocaust, each individual will, in their own way, learn to live with the trauma experienced by the victims.

The complexity of the effects of the Holocaust is unique to each family's interpersonal relationships and forms of communication. In the case of my family, the repression of communicating the emotional impact of the Holocaust has left knowable scars on many family members. Part of this comes from the survivor's reaction and coping mechanisms after enduring such terrifying experiences. It is well understood that my grandmother suffered severe depression throughout her life and possibly experienced her own form of survivor's guilt.

The complexity of my great-grandparents' relationship and mixed marriage during the War also figures prominently in this discussion. Before my great-grandmother met and married my great-grandfather, she had a child, Walter, out of wedlock with a prominent SS officer. Because my great-grandmother and great-grandfather were in a mixed marriage between an Aryan German and a Jewish Slovakian during the war, my grandmother was subjected to rejection from her community at a very young age. My grandmother was also baptized in the Catholic church during this time. My great-grandmother was Catholic and hoped that my grandmother's baptism would save her from being subjected to the same treatment as her father. Additionally, as politics in Germany became increasingly volatile, her stepbrother, Walter, was influenced by his biological father's beliefs and often rejected his extended Jewish family.

⁶ Chaitin 2002, 381

⁷ Chaitin 2002, 381

After surviving the Mauthausen concentration camp at the age of 11, my grandmother, great-grandmother, and great-grandfather were the only known survivors from my extended family. After restarting their lives and immigrating to the United States, they rarely spoke about their experiences at the camps. It wasn't until September of 1984, during the Nazi Trials, that the buried history resurfaced. My great-grandfather took part in a trial for Alois Brunner, a top "Obergruppenfuehrer" of the Gestapo, and my grandmother reluctantly accompanied him to the New York trial, revealing her history to my mother for the first time.

The repression and veiling of the history of the Holocaust is not uncommon among families of survivors. The results of Chaitin's research reveal how suppression of the survivor's experiences in family communication creates long term effects, also known as "the conspiracy of silence."⁸ The silence continues throughout the generations, at times mimicking the emotional difficulty of what can or cannot be discussed.⁹ This often distances communication and significantly weakens relationships between family members, past and present. In addition, the "conspiracy of silence" and/or sudden discoveries relating to the connection to the Holocaust potentially create identity conflicts for many individuals.

However, in relation to Holocaust survivors and their descendants, there are possible positive traits that have derived from the survivors' traumatic experiences. Research suggests that "the resilient traits (such as adaptability, initiative, and tenacity) that enabled Jews to survive the Holocaust may have also accounted for their later success and such characteristics may have been passed on to their children."¹⁰ Unfortunately, the tendency to concentrate on the negative

⁸ Chaitin 2002, 395

⁹ Chaitin 2002, 395

¹⁰ American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, 2012

psychological effects that follow life-altering experiences often undermines the long term positive effects of survivors.

III. CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

HISTORICAL ART INFLUENCES

When attaining my undergraduate degree at Winthrop University, I associated mainly with artists utilizing war and political imagery. It was around this time when I began to obsessively research the history of the Holocaust, and I found myself searching for artists that reflected my often confused and emotional disposition.

Printmaker, Francisco Goya's *Disasters of War* series reflected many of my thoughts on war and the aftermath of violent conflicts. The eighty-two etchings from Goya's series visually represent the atrocities, starvation, degradation, and humiliation. These prints have also been described as the "prodigious flowering of rage" as well as the "work of a memory that knew no forgiveness."¹¹ His work suggested to me many thematic ties to the copious Holocaust documentary photography and film footage that I was investigating.

I also felt a strong connection to the emotional prints and drawings by Käthe Kollwitz. Her work represents the heartache and sorrow that occurred when experiencing loss, often reflecting the social conditions of her time. Much of her work visually characterizes her concern with the subjects of war, poverty, working class life and the lives of ordinary women.¹² The death of her youngest son during a battle in 1914 had a profound effect on her, and she expressed her grief in a series of emotional prints of a mother protecting her children, and of a mother

¹¹ Connell 2004, 165

¹² Ro Gallery, 2012

grieving and desperately holding her dead child.¹³ The expressive impact of her work helped me to connect further to the content of my work, offering me a place to grieve the enormity of death and destruction of my family's past.

In graduate school, I closely studied artistic interpretations of the Civil War and the complex activity of collecting and coming to terms with Civil War photographs. Much of my art historical research has concerned the aftermath of the immense destruction and the visual attempts at mending the nation through a variety of artistic methods, such as paintings, prints, and photography. As much as many individuals attempted to forget all that had been lost, trauma of the past surfaced in American cultural memory, often revealed through symbolism of harvesting and sowing in many Civil War paintings. Because of this, various intentionally repressed memories haunt many Civil War and post War paintings, in spite of many efforts to forget the past years of conflict.

Winslow Homer's Civil War paintings suggest the theme of absence as a way to facilitate the preservation of memory and the understanding of trauma and loss in paintings like *The Initials*. The artist created this work in 1864, towards the end of the Civil War.¹⁴ The painting subtly suggests the loss of loved ones, focusing on the war's effect on civilians in the midst of the conflict. *The Initials* not only alludes to the loss of life and the absence of an individual, but the performance of physically carving a memory into an object as means of preservation. Much of the research about art during and after the Civil War helped in propelling my work forward, offering me an opportunity to convey my own interpretation of memory and preservation.

¹³ Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2013

¹⁴ Simpson 1988, 227

CONTEMPORARY ART INFLUENCES

After committing myself to making work about my family history, I feel a strong association with Kara Walker's internal approach to her concepts. I respect her attempt at digging into the past, unafraid of tapping into her imagination, which I realize can be incredibly disturbing and damaging to an individual's consciousness. As stated earlier, the third generation of survivors has the choice to, at times, attempt to relive and understand the victims past. As they rely solely on their imagination, the individual will walk a fine line between communicating the survivor's experiences and the individual's interpretations of the Holocaust.

Kara Walker's typed text on notecards often run parallel with many questions that are raised throughout my artistic process. I constantly question my obsession with documenting my family history and my relationship to the past. I also find myself questioning how my family, past and present, will interpret and associate with the objects I create.

Here are two examples of her writing:

"The survivors, though – we cannot honor appropriately enough. We cannot repair the ages of damage to lives, whole generations of human beings righted with laws, songs, written words, paintings, monuments, holidays, moments of silence, and vigils – especially not with money or apportions of land...Because worse than living with remorse or even uncertainty, is paying up and forgetting."¹⁵

¹⁵ Walker 2003, 105

“The dead do not make their wishes known clearly enough to follow. Perhaps they have none? It is easier to live life assuming this, that the dead do not – cannot speak through us. Worse is living with the possibility. Making real the suspect. Danger lies there.”¹⁶

The questions raised by Kara Walker also link closely to other rituals of remembrance. Lisa Saltzman’s book, *Making Memory Matter*, discusses how the preservation of memory is intertwined with many contemporary artists’ conceptual approach to their work. She states that, “experiences and events are variously individual or collective, local or national, every day or traumatic...going back and forth between past and present to make memory matter.”¹⁷ The emotional impact of life and death are universal, offering a variety of rituals of remembrance in a range of cultures.

For many contemporary artists, there is a self-conscious distance from purely representational forms of art, often using the distance as a strategy to structure the work in a “deeply memorial, decidedly historical art of the present.”¹⁸ These artists find themselves returning to the ritual, often forming communication without requiring an understanding of different languages. As contemporary artists attempt to tap into the emotional response of the viewer, collective representations of emotions are, at times, embodied in material objects.

Lisa Saltzman and Eric Rosenberg’s book, *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity*, also raises questions in conjunction to what happens when trauma intercedes with the relationship between visual objects and history. It can be argued that representations of trauma do little more

¹⁶ Walker 2003, 105

¹⁷ Saltzman 2006, 6

¹⁸ Saltzman 2006, 13

than point out their own limitations.¹⁹ In relation, codes or conspiracies of silence can also be interpreted as failures to testify, further complicating ways that artists approach and visualize memory and trauma. As artists deal with the complexity of conveying human emotion, trauma art is representative of something that is both specific and universal. In effect, artistic objects are often infused with emotional responses, offering an object multiple meanings for the artist and the viewer.

As I continued to expand how materials and objects influenced my work, I started to investigate textile artists and their conceptual approach to materials. The exhibitions, *Radical Lace and Subversive Knitting* and *Conceptual Textiles: Material Meanings* became essential in the development of my work. Artists, such as Anne Wilson, Annet Couwenberg and Carson Fox, influenced how I could radically change my approach to my concept. In conjunction, I became increasingly interested in ways that I could incorporate sensory communication into my work.

Art historian Ewa Kuryluk also advocates that the physical nature of cloth can metaphorically suggest memory. She writes, “Cloth, as it is folded and unfolded, stored away and unrolled, seems suitable for representing memory.”²⁰ Peter Stallybrass takes Kuryluk’s idea further in his opinion that cloth not only contains memory, but is a “kind of memory” because of its distinctively intimate and integral role in our daily lives.”²¹ As I began working in several materials to form layers of symbolism, I realized that my work doesn’t fit neatly in to any particular category, in turn forcing me to better explore the many layers of meaning that could be utilized in each piece. I found myself becoming increasingly interested in forcing the viewer to

¹⁹ Saltzman 2006, 3

²⁰ John Michael Kohler Arts Center 1998, 11

²¹ John Michael Kohler Arts Center 1998, 11

touch the objects that I was creating, leading me to incorporate forms of bookmaking into the work.

IV. TETHERED EXHIBITION

CONCEPT OF THE WORK

Tethered addresses the innate fear of forgetting where an individual's family originates, both physically and historically. Not long after discovering that part of my family was almost completely annihilated during the Holocaust, I produced *Tethered* as visual documentation of the long-term effects of families of survivors. The exhibition is also influenced by my grandmother's experiences as a Mauthausen concentration camp survivor and my own experiences being raised by a survivor.

The knowledge of the imminent loss of memory initiates an instinct to repetitively record and remember personal history. Numerous memories have been forcefully buried in the darkest recesses of the minds of many family members-- they continuously surface through communication with my mother and grandmother. As personal memory is collectively shared, psychological effects of the survivor pass on through storytelling. As artistic objects develop, I continue to search for threads between history, place, and identity as a way to demonstrate a new reality, a struggle, and a story.

The books and prints in the exhibition symbolize the compilation and transportation of memory that is witnessed through sensory communication and observation. Fragility of memory and history is emphasized through the use of materials and construction of each object. Many of the objects reiterate the struggle to address what is missing or what will eventually disappear and never return. Other objects symbolize the residual effects of the past and how they are still present in family's daily lives. The iconography of loss plays an important role in constructing

each piece, creating a complex relationship between narration and symbolization. With each object, I attempt to grasp a lost identity and the haunting memories of experiences that are not fully understood.

MATERIALS AND PROCESSES

Many of the materials used in *Tethered* reference family objects and essential symbols for stories told by my mother and grandmother. Some of these objects are family artifacts while others serve as representations of family objects and stories from the past and present. Many of the dresses and garments in *Tethered* allude to clothing from my childhood closet and clothing seen my grandfather's family videos from the 1950's and 1960's.

The Closet (Fig.1) is a multilayered reference to the women in my family and the secrets that have remained hidden throughout the years. The imagery was inspired by memories of clothing stored in my closet in South Carolina. Throughout my childhood, the closet held a vast collection of nostalgic clothing from me, my mother, and grandmother. Some garments included a handmade bridesmaid's dress from my mother's wedding, my mother's honeymoon dress, dance costumes and a variety of clothing worn for weddings, funerals, and formal occasions. I was fascinated with wearing the clothing, usually picking a day out of the week to play dress up. Over time, my mother's clothing began to gradually fit my body, connecting me further to the past and to the women in my family. Recently, I came to a point where my mother's clothing fit me perfectly, even allowing me to wear her wedding dress without any alterations for my own upcoming wedding. It was at that point when I felt the closest connection with my mother, using the clothing to essentially relive one of the most important days of her life.

The wedding dress is also utilized in the sculpture *Deflated* (Fig. 4), offering the viewer an opportunity to visually connect to four generations of the women in my family. I was lucky

enough to come across a wedding dress that was identical to my mother's, except it was in a much worse condition. The beautiful garment was yellowing, frayed, stained, and ripping at seams. I immediately bought it, hoping to use the dress as a metaphor for the incredibly complex relationships between the women in my family.

Much of the inspiration for *Deflated* comes from my mother's experiences growing up with a survivor. As my grandmother suffered from the psychological effects of her experiences during the war, my mother was forced to reverse the roles of the mother and daughter relationship. She took care of her other siblings, losing her own childhood innocence at a young age. As my grandmother continues to age, my mother's role as a caretaker increases, offering my mother and grandmother opportunities to mend damage from the past and create a stronger mother/daughter bond.

In *Deflated*, the wedding dress cradles another dress that was created from printing and sewing a lithograph on the bodice of the delicate chiffon dress, utilizing the skirt of the dress to wipe the plate and ink palette clean. The residue created from cleaning the plate creates a metaphor for my grandmother's experiences during the Holocaust and the residual and long term effects of the event. As the dress is supported by the wedding dress, the remains from the delicate clothing slowly stain the whiteness of the gown. The two dresses connect to a small military parachute, connecting their history to my great-grandmother's experiences during the war.

I am also deeply inspired by my great-grandmother's experiences and artifacts from her life. Although she passed away before I was born, I have always felt a strong connection to her stories, and I often find myself attempting to relive her experiences when developing my work.

As stated earlier, I grew up surrounded by objects from my great-grandmother, many of which relate to her experiences as a seamstress.

Over the past few months, I have become more attached to the handmade doilies that were created throughout her life. After discovering the misfortunes that my great-grandmother experienced before and after the war, I became increasingly interested in her hands and the objects that she created. During the war, my great-grandmother was forced out of work and relied on sewing as a means for survival. In addition, she was then forced to work in a factory making screws for the German war effort as punishment for marrying a Jewish man. My grandmother often describes how my great-grandmother's hands would constantly bleed from the deep cuts and scratches from working in the factory. After the war, my great-grandmother experienced difficulty finding a job in the United States and worked long hours weaving door screens.

As more stories surface, I find myself viewing the collection of my great-grandmother's doilies as an extension of her, often personifying the objects with the individual. The doilies are utilized in several artistic processes and techniques. Many of my great-grandmother's lace doilies are incredibly delicate, and I did not want to destroy the artifacts during the creative process. The most delicate doilies were used as stencils for prints and books in the exhibition. The negative spaces between the knots and threads were traced onto prints and burned through with a wood burning tool, creating an ash residue and leaving behind the smell of burned paper. Several books and prints have burned marks, embossing/debossing of antique doilies, and stains to visualize the residual effects or "stains of the past" that continuously veil and reveal family history.

Other family objects, such as the porcelain slip cast thimbles, have unconsciously become personifications of lost family members. At one point, I spent several months slip casting thimbles without firing the clay. When I was finally ready to load the kiln full of the objects, I became increasingly panicked and nervous about firing the objects, often abandoning the kiln and leaving the objects unfired in their most fragile state. The only objects that were fired in the kiln were placed in the kiln by another person. I realize now how much I personified the thimbles as individuals, and thought often about the history of the Holocaust and crematoriums. Because of the guilt experienced from mimicking the past, many of the objects in the exhibition have been left unfired and will potentially become destroyed over time.

V. CONCLUSION

As new stories are revealed, I become further immersed in the process of recording my family history, attempting to preserve and tie together a history that is rapidly vanishing. Although I am reaching the end of my time in the graduate program, I am only scraping the surface of what the exhibition, *Tethered*, entails. As an individual that represents the third generation of Holocaust survivors, my decision to continue or abandon recording and communicating family history to further generations clearly defines my future endeavors as an artist. As new ideas develop, I hope to find new threads of visualizing these family experiences at a universal level with hope of preserving the preciousness of my family history.

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VII. APPENDIX A: INDIVIDUAL WORKS



Figure 1: *The Closet*, lithograph on Kitakata paper, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski



Figure 2: *Ascension*, lithograph on Kitakata paper, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski

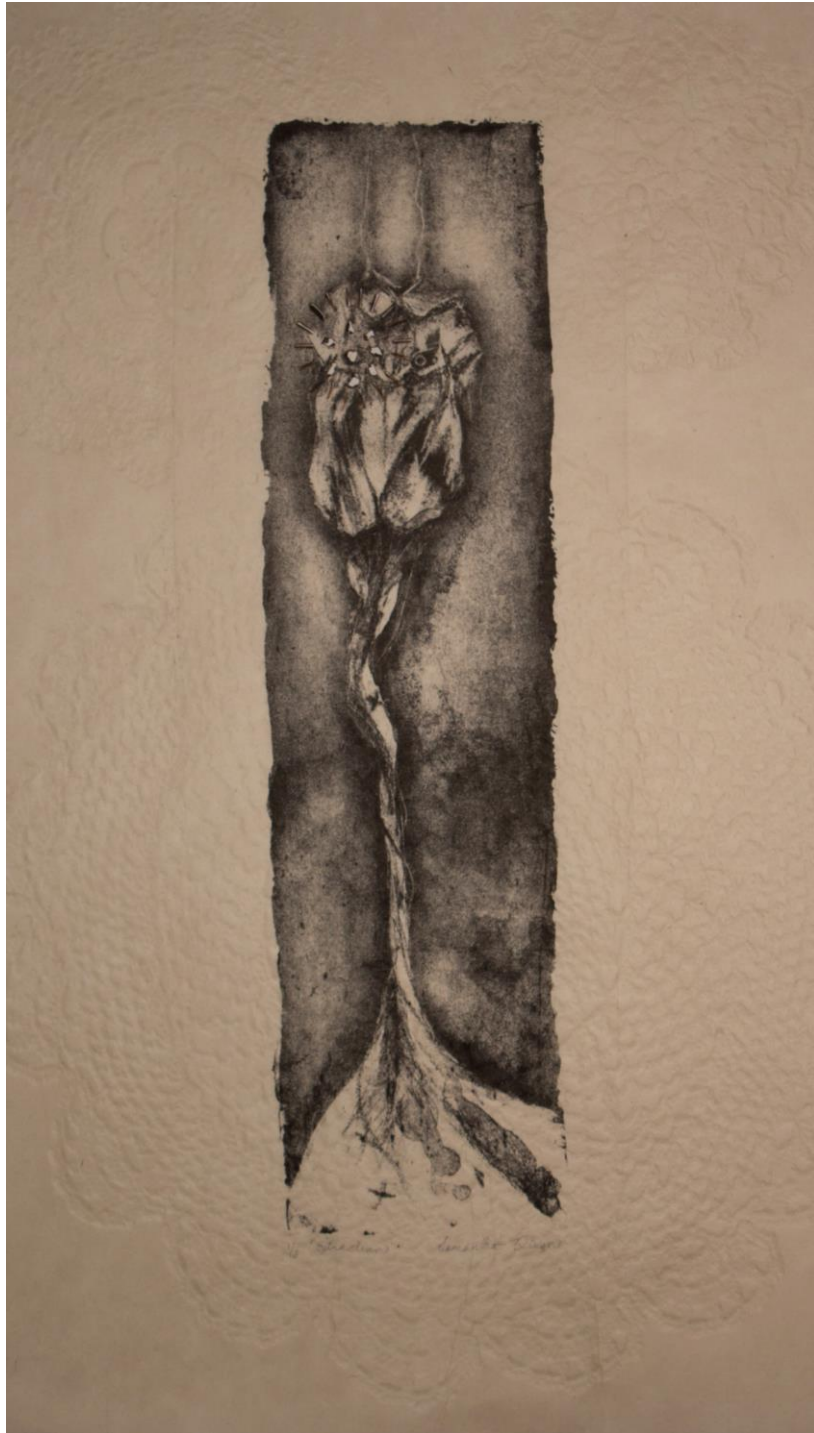


Figure 3: *Extraction*, lithograph on Kitakata paper, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski



Figure 4: *Deflated*, lithograph on handmade chiffon gown, salvaged wedding dress, porcelain slip cast wheels, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski



Figure 4 (detail): *Deflated*, lithograph on handmade chiffon gown,
salvaged wedding dress, porcelain slip cast wheels, 2013
Images credit: Ross Kosakowski



Figure 5: *Eradication*, Intaglio and relief print on Kitakata paper, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski

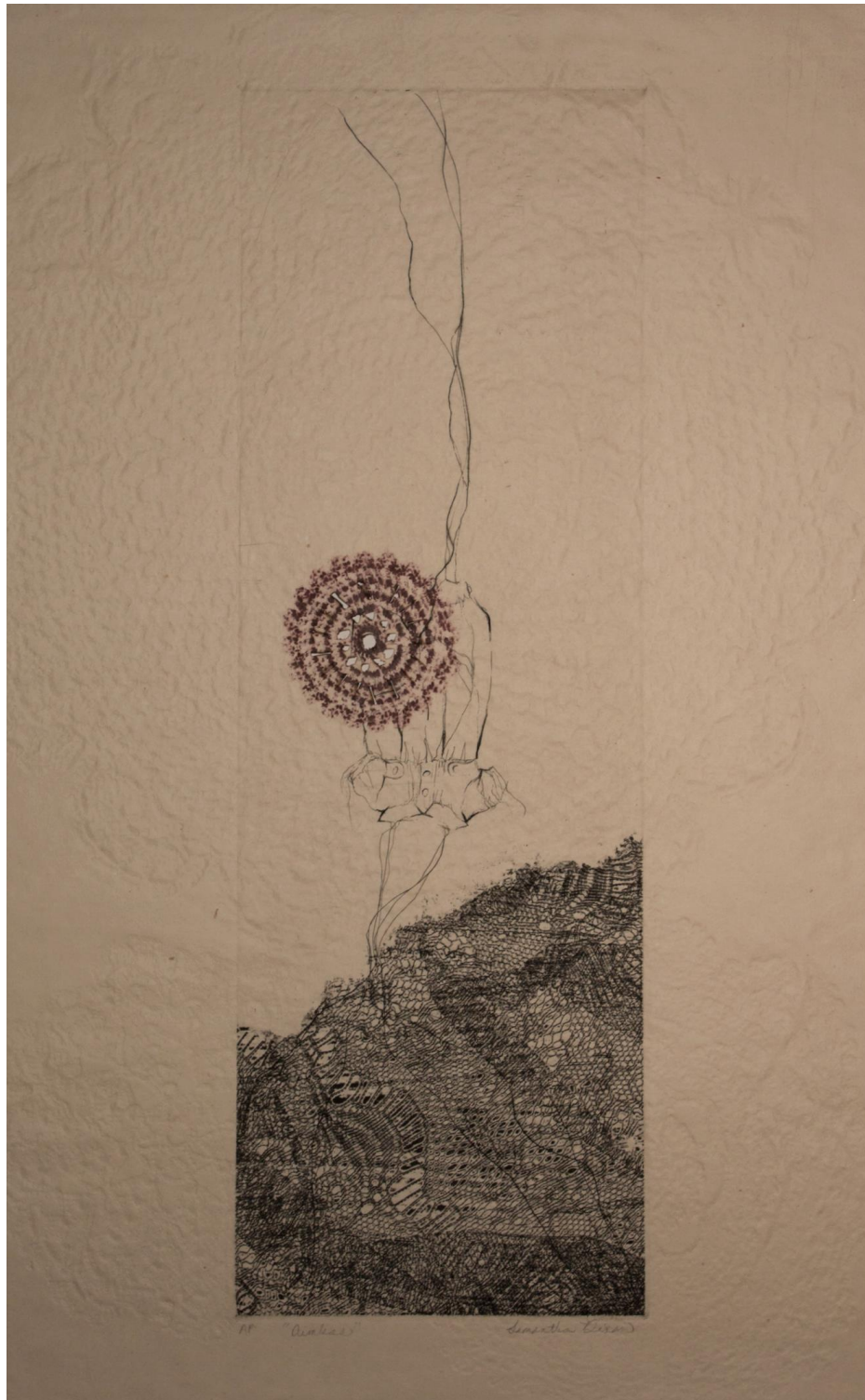


Figure 6: *Aimless*, Intaglio and relief print on Kitakata paper, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski



Figure 7: *Inflated*, Intaglio and relief print on Kitakata paper, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski

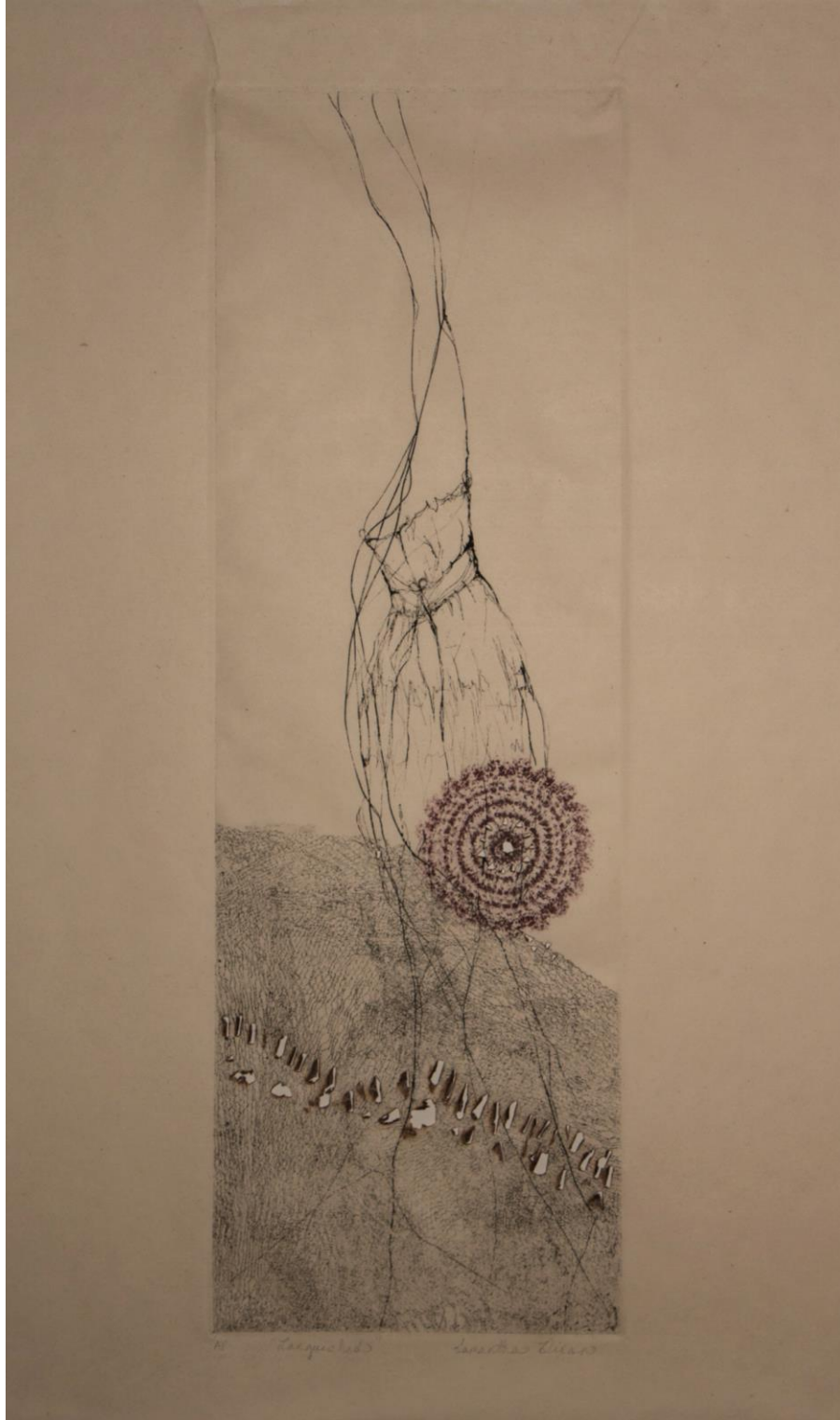


Figure 8: *Languished*, Intaglio and relief print on Kitakata paper, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski



Figure 9: *Ward*, porcelain slip cast thimbles, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski

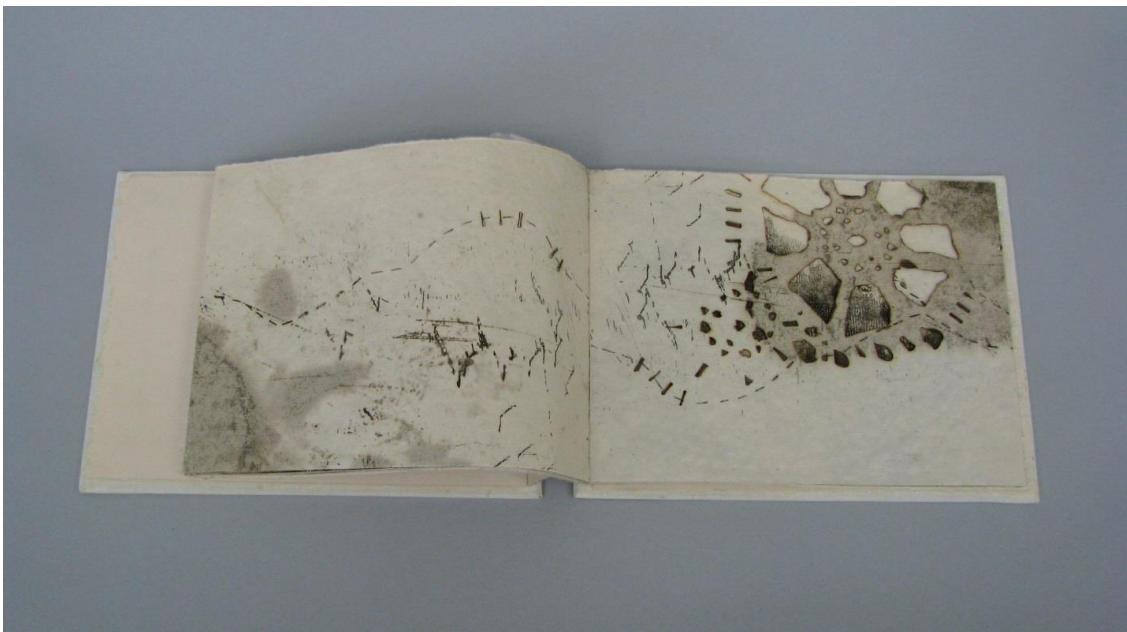


Figure 10: *Flesh and Blood*, artist book and burned intaglio prints on Kitakata paper, 2013
Images credit: Samantha Dixon



Figure 11: *Degeneration*, artist book, Van Dyke Brown prints, lithograph prints, 2013
Images credit: Samantha Dixon



Figure 12: *Woven*, artist book, burned intaglio prints, letterpress pressure prints, 2013
 Images credit: Ross Kosakowski

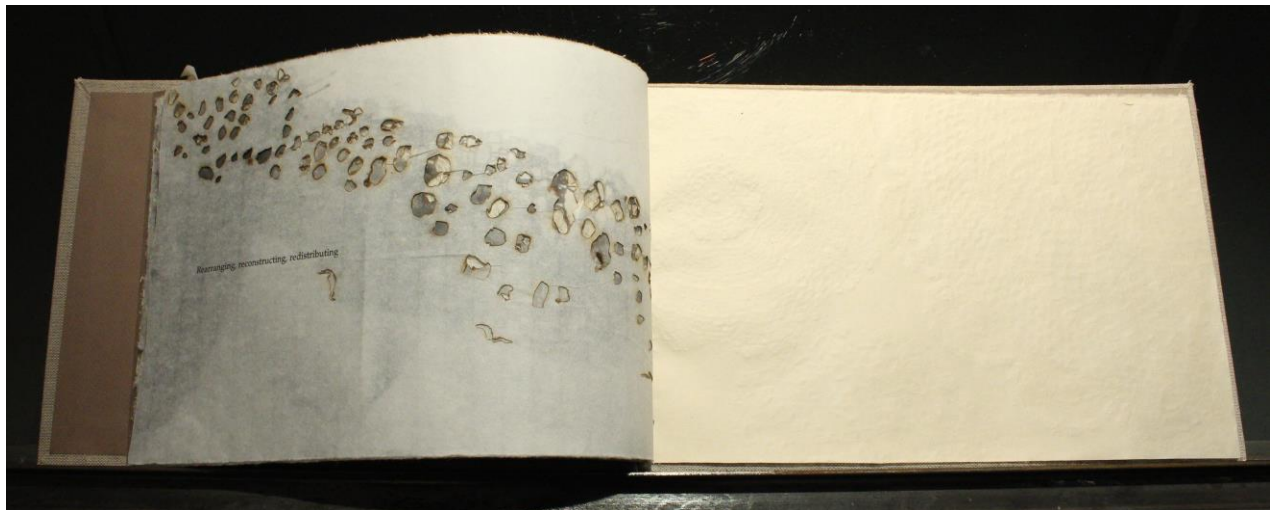
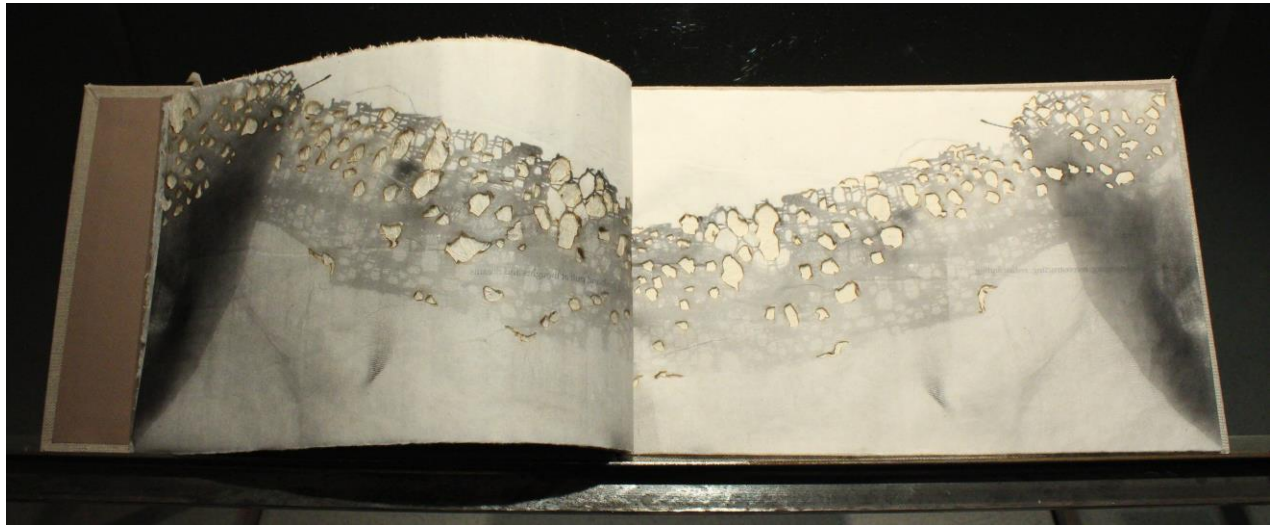


Figure 13: *Apparition*, Japanese stab bound artist book and burned digital prints, 2013
Images credit: Ross Kosakowski



Figure 14: *Unhitched*, burned intaglio print on rice paper, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski



Figure 15: *Preservation*, burned intaglio print on rice paper, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski

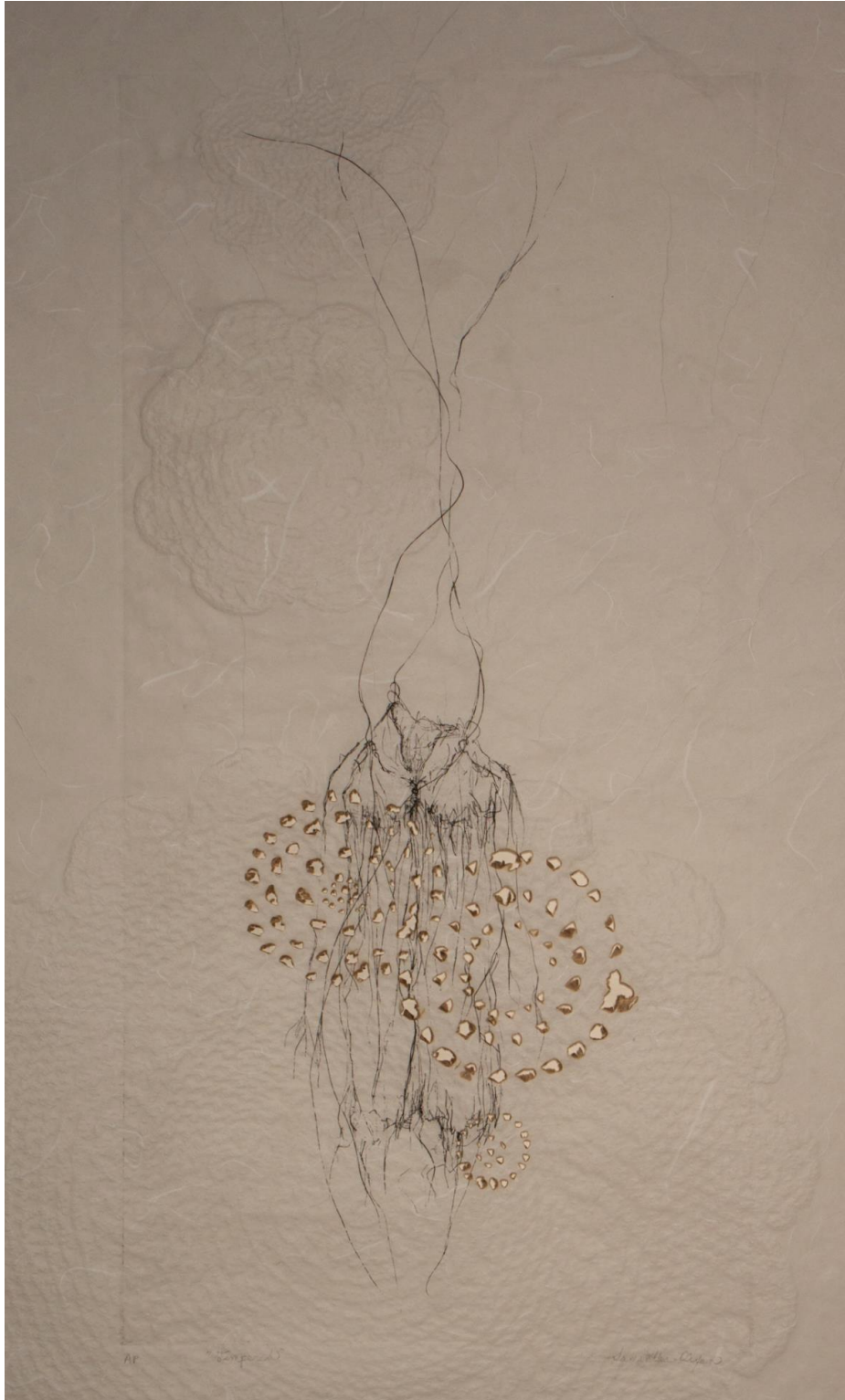


Figure 16: *Tempered*, burned intaglio print on rice paper, 2013
Image credit: Ross Kosakowski

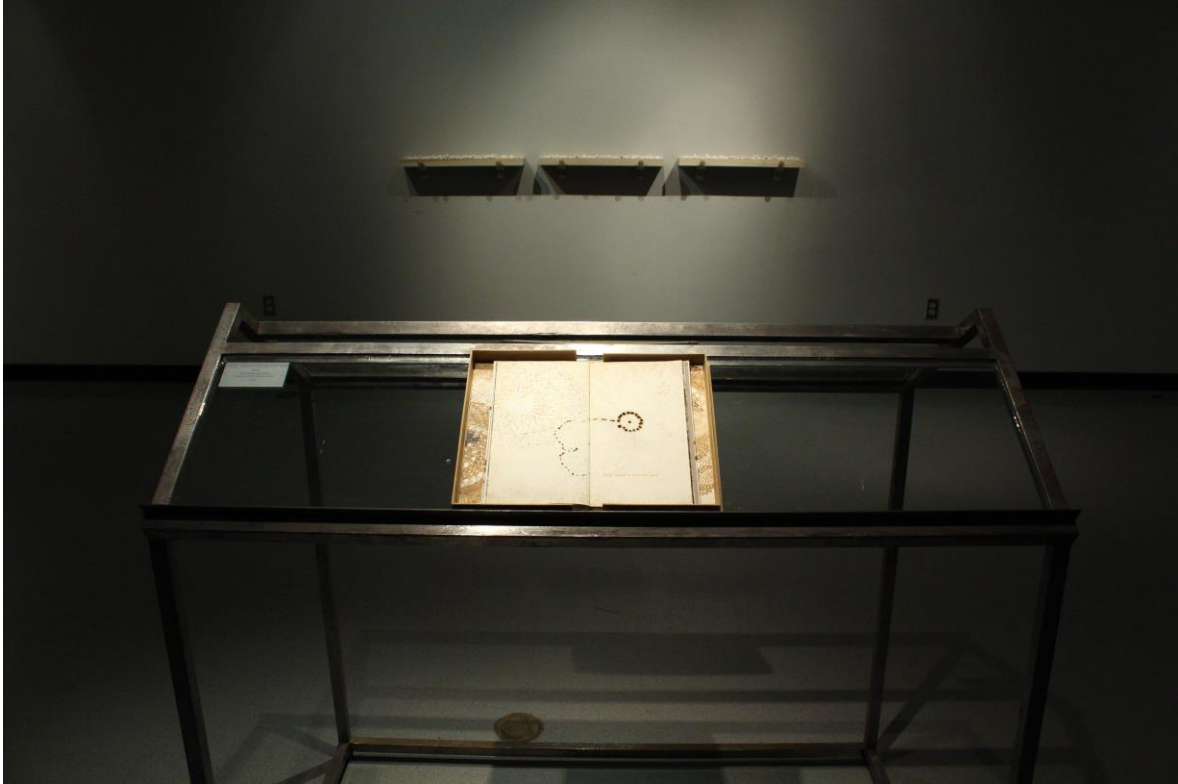
VIII. APPENDIX B: EXHIBITION PHOTOGRAPHS



Images credit: Ross Kosakowski



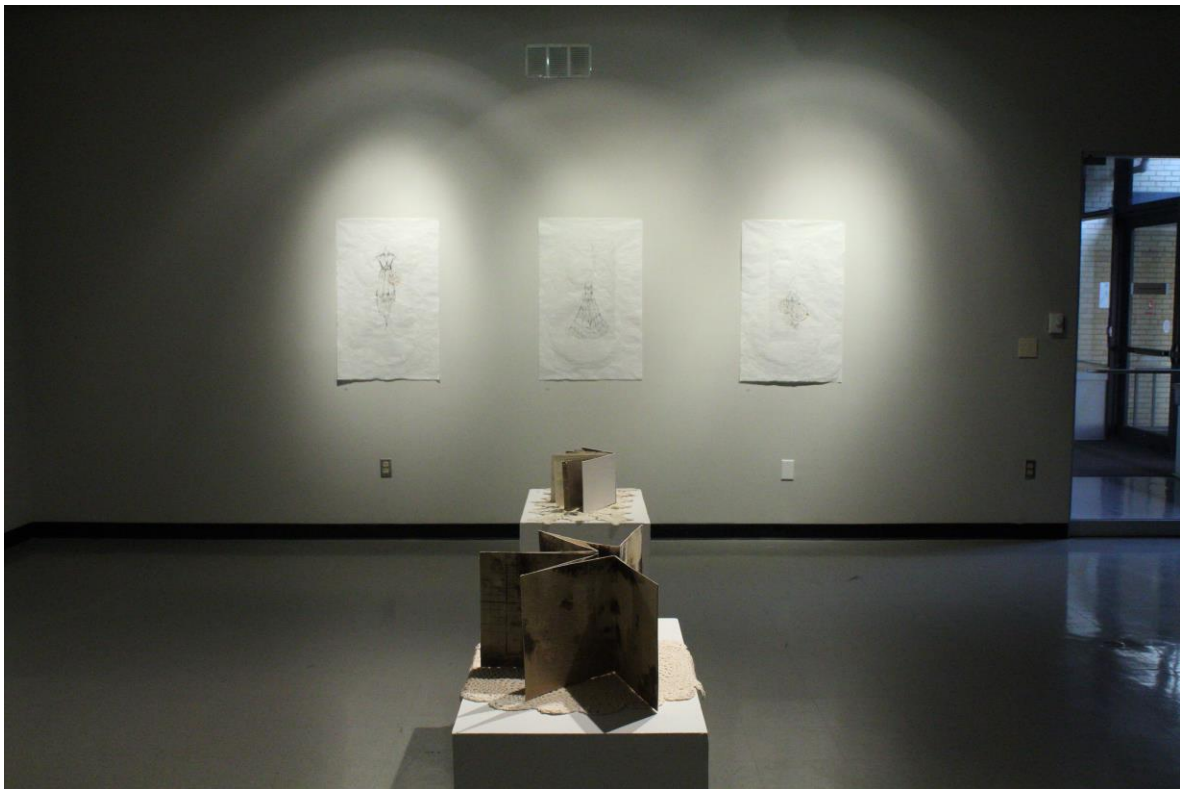
Images credit: Ross Kosakowski



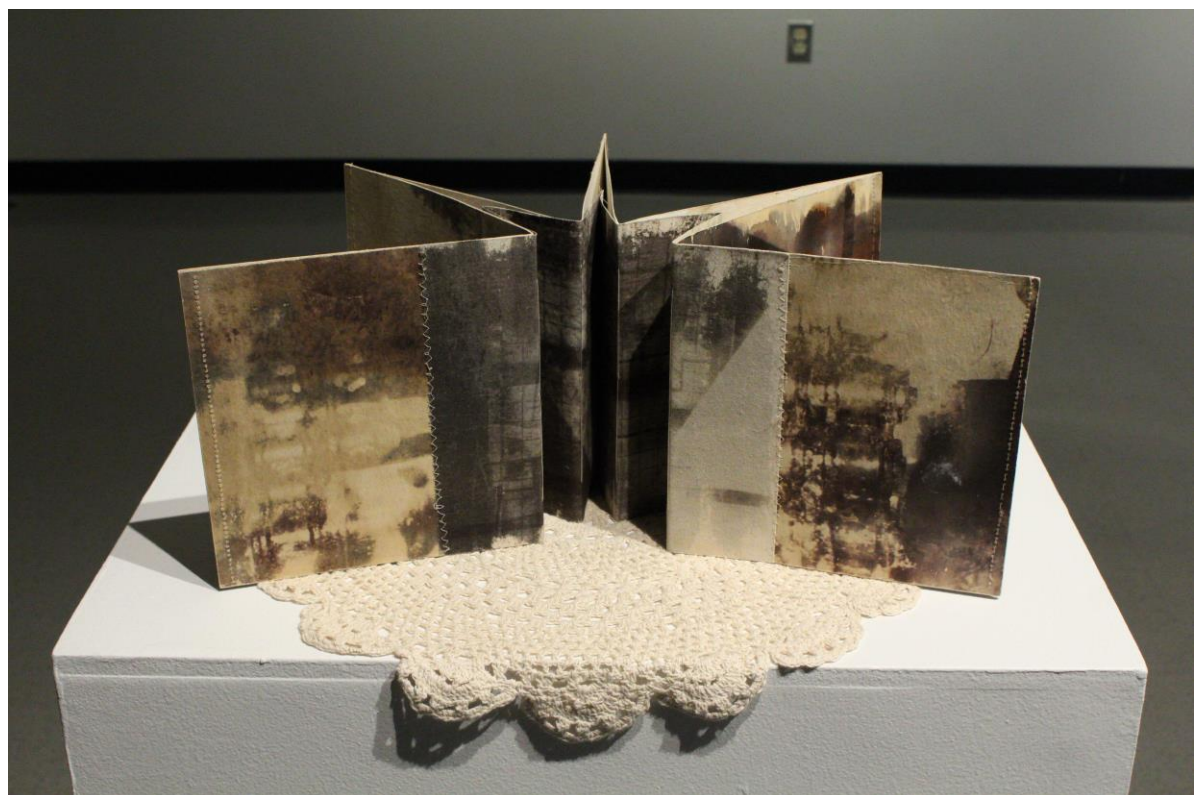
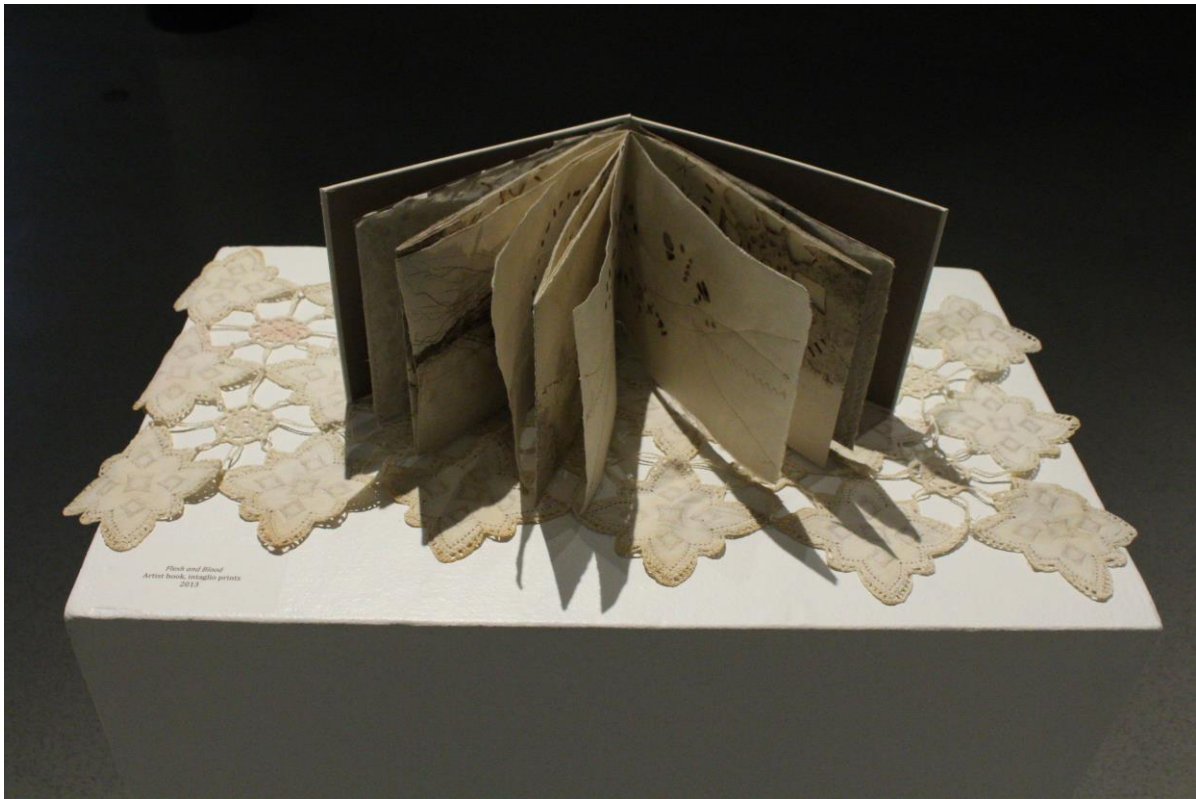
Images credit: Ross Kosakowski



Images credit: Ross Kosakowski



Images credit: Ross Kosakowski



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